

Hi Folks,

Last summer I said I hoped I never had to wear those tall rubber boots and rain coat again! Now I wish it would rain and I would be happy to wear my boots. There has been rain but it has been spotty. Can't complain about the mud for a change. Hopefully we will get some relief soon!

Be sure your animals have enough feed. Many pastures are short and the only thing left are weeds and sometimes poisonous plants that the animals would not normally eat. If your pastures are bare, it is better to pull the animals off and feed them – better for the animals and better for the pasture. We had to pull the sheep and beef off our pastures for the first time in many, many years. I can remember feeding some round bales in late July one year as a supplement but I don't remember having to pull them right off and let the pasture grow back.

Check your water supplies for freshness and amount. Remember creeks and wet spots the animals used to drink out of probably aren't there this year. If you have guardian dogs, they need a supply of fresh water, too. The livestock drink more when they are eating dry feed and if you have lambs or kids out there they are adding to the amount of water needed this time of year as well. At home I had to go to two troughs and fill them twice a day.

A water-wagon works well. I have used one at work and at home. It gives the sheep/goats/dogs a place to get out of the sun and provides continuous water out in the pasture. Start with an old wagon and add a water tank – I found one at an amish lumber yard and one at a local agribusiness. We started with one and added another tank when the weather got so dry that we had to fill it more than once a week. Just remember that water is heavy! Make sure the tired on the wagon are good enough to hold the weight...otherwise you will be doing what we did – using the portable compressor to pump up the tires just before you move the wagon every time.

One challenge is finding the plumbing parts that will get you from the outlet on the tank down to a garden hose size. Usually the people at the plumbing supply store or hardware store can help you but it can take a few tries. Then use sturdy hose because otherwise it will kink where it bends down to the trough. You will be cutting it into lengths and adding new ends so plan ahead. Get a float and make sure there are no leaks. This can be a challenge because you now have connections at the tank and the float and new ends on the hoses, etc., and things get jiggled around by the animals. Occasionally the animals will rip the hose out of the float and drain the tank...not a good day...usually it is a hot day when everyone is out of town. Use a short hose to get from the tank to the trough so the sheep/goats are less likely to get caught in it. Don't be afraid to try again with a different hose or different end or use some plumbing tape, etc.

Another tip has to do with the fence. We use electronet . It is important not to put the fence too close to the wagon (or the wagon too close to the fence). The more sheep you have, the more important this is. Sometimes when we move the sheep we leave the wagon where it is and run a loop of fence around the wagon so the animals can get to it from the new paddock. This works fine as long as there is enough room so that if the animals sleeping under and around the wagon get spooked they won't go through the fence. We had all the sheep out at home one day when the guard dogs jumped up and the sheep all went sideways through a fence they wouldn't normally have crossed.

The lack of rain has slowed down our oats demonstration as well. Our sheep pasture has been plowed up for re-seeding but we are growing a crop of forage oats on it first. The plan is to harvest the oats this fall as baleage and then re-seed the pasture next spring. That puts the land out of commission for grazing until at least next fall. However, we are hoping the oat baleage will be a good feed for feeding grass finishing beef or big lambs. It should be relatively high in sugars and very palatable. I was hoping

to put some pictures in the news but there isn't much to see yet. A good rain would help! There are three different oat varieties in blocks around the field.

We are hoping to plant a stand of Birdsfoot Trefoil and Timothy up on the back hill in a place that was mostly undesirable grasses. Birdsfoot is actually an anthelmintic - helps beat back the internal parasites in those animals that eat it. Will keep you posted as that progresses.

I bet you all would like to get those bags of wool out of your barn! We have a wool pool tentatively planned for Saturday October 13th. Please let me know how much wool you are bringing. Some of you have already checked in. I am waiting to hear on prices but should know soon. We can always use your help the day of the pool so plan to drop off your wool and then stay for a little while and socialize and help load wool. We always appreciate food, too. One year we had a great meal of raspberry pie and other snacks. Wool should be brought in wool bags or at least heavy contractor bags and should be dry and clean. We will weigh it and give you a receipt. It sometimes takes months to actually get paid but we have always gotten paid in the end. They will accept colored wool. If you need wool bags you can contact Mid-States Wool Growers at 800-841-9665.

Marketing has been very frustrating this summer and fall. The processors are booked up for local sales and the auction markets are very low due to many farmers sending their stock to the sale due to lack of feed. Ramadan is over and there were very few lambs at the sale but demand was still low. There should be a demand in September when there are some holidays and then again as the supply dwindles later in the fall and winter. It will be interesting to see what the prices are September 10th in New Holland when Rosh Hashanah should increase the demand. Some other possible blips in the market could happen at the Festival of the Sacrifice October 26th or Islamic New Year November 15th. In the meantime, most of us are short of feed and grain prices are very high. So if you can afford to hold your lambs, then you might be better off to do that. If you are out of feed then try to sell strategically.

We are organizing a truck to New Holland for September 29th at the Extension Farm for anyone wanting to send lambs, sheep, kids and goats. While this doesn't coincide with any of the holidays it will allow those that want or need to send culls or need space to get the animals moved. It would be possible to schedule other trucking later in the fall. Please let me know what you have to go on the truck so we can figure out what size truck to take.

Along those lines, it is hard to know how hard to push the lambs you have. If you are trying to get them bigger and move them out then you need to figure out your costs of keeping them. We fed 800 pounds of grain to a group of lambs over about two weeks. During that time they gained a total of 409 pounds. If lamb is worth \$1.50 a pound then they gained \$613.50 worth of lamb and the grain cost \$200.00 (at \$500.00 per ton for our custom mix). So while there are other expenses, at least we are covering the grain expense as long as they gain that well. If the lambs are already 85-90 pounds then it would make sense to feed them good quality forage (good pasture if you have it or good quality baled hay and minerals) or a less intense grain ration and grow them slower while you wait for prices to increase. One caution, don't feed just corn or just oats or any other feed without balancing the minerals. Ram lambs are quite susceptible to urinary calculi when the ration minerals are off.

We are weighing our lambs this afternoon and putting the 90 pounders back on forage and minerals and putting the grain into the smaller ones to get them up to size. There are several markets for 90 pound lambs but they take more work to coordinate. The heat can slow down their growth and also adds to the chances of respiratory problems. Make sure all your animals have enough air if you have them confined inside. A couple cheap box fans can really help the air flow and help keep flies at bay.